

# Pest Update (May 23, 2012)

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Note: samples containing living tissue may only be accepted from South Dakota. Please do not send samples of dying plants or insects from other states. If you live outside of South Dakota and have a question, instead please send a digital picture of the pest or problem. **Walnut samples may not be sent in from any location – please provide a picture!**

## Available on the net at:

<http://sdda.sd.gov/Forestry/Educational-Information/PestAlert-Archives.aspx>

Any treatment recommendations, including those identifying specific pesticides, are for the convenience of the reader. Pesticides mentioned in this publication are generally those that are most commonly available to the public in South Dakota and the inclusion of a product shall not be taken as an endorsement or the exclusion a criticism regarding effectiveness. Please read and follow all label instructions and the label is the final authority for a product's use on a particular pest or plant. Products requiring a commercial pesticide license are occasionally mentioned if there are limited options available. These products will be identified as such but it is the reader's responsibility to determine if they can legally apply any product identified in this publication.

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## Plant development



We are still ahead of plant development this year due to the mild winter and early spring. Last year the crabapples were blooming, this year that was weeks ago and now the Japanese tree lilacs are just beginning to bloom in Brookings – about 3 weeks earlier than normal.

## Current concerns



**What has been happening with emerald ash borer?** Not a lot in the last year or two; a major reason the insect has dropped off the radar for many tree owners. When the insect was found a few years ago in the Minneapolis-St Paul area that news touched off a wave of calls to Dept. of Ag foresters and extension educators from the public. Since that time the insect has been found in a number of locations along the Mississippi River from northern Iowa to the Twin Cities but has not be found further west. The infestation in the Twin Cities appears to have started in 2005 and fortunately was detected only a few years later before the population had much

time to expand. Generally it is about the 8<sup>th</sup> year after the insect is introduced into a new area before the population, and subsequent tree mortality, explodes. This is a good reason for everyone to still keep looking for the telltale symptoms of an infestation – clusters of dead and dying ash with extensive woodpecker damage or vertical bark splits. So far this year all the calls about a possible EAB infestation have proven false; instead the insect killing the tree was either the clearwing ash borer or the redheaded ash borer. The insect submitted as possible EAB have all proven to be the golden buprestid.

## Tasks to complete

One task that can be completed now is shearing of pines. The only way to shape pines, such as mugo pine, is to cut a portion of the candle. The candle is the new growth that has elongated but the needles have not yet expanded. If the upper half of the candle is removed, the shoot growth will also be reduced in half and more side shoots will develop from this tip the following year. Once the candle has hardened and the new needle fully expanded, it is too late to cut.

The other task that needs to be completed now is spraying ponderosa pine trees to protect them from mountain pine beetle. The beetles will be flying in about another month and a tree must be sprayed before the flights begin to be protected. See earlier *Updates* this year for more information.

## E-samples

I have been receiving a lot of picture samples, e-samples, probably due to a digital camera is on about every phone! Here are some of the most common samples received in the past week.



**In addition to the ash rust discussed in the last Update we are also seeing crown rust on buckthorn.** Why anyone cares about a disease that attacks buckthorn is beyond me but I always get a few samples at this time of year about the disease. First buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) is a tall shrub/small tree that is sometimes becomes large enough to be confused with crabapples

(except buckthorn does not have a showy flower and the fruit is a small purplish-black berry rather than a crabapple). The disease, crown rust, alternates between buckthorn and cereal crops and grasses. While buckthorn is the primary woody host, the disease is also present on silverberry and buffaloberry. There is no control for the disease as buckthorn is considered a weed rather than a valuable ornamental.



**Another rust disease, closely related to cedar-apple rust, is the cedar-serviceberry rust.**

In addition to cedar-apple rust and cedar-hawthorn rust, there is also cedar-serviceberry rust in which the host is serviceberry (aka juneberry, *Amelanchier*) and the alternate host remains the same, redcedar or juniper. The leaves develop the characteristic raised orange-red spots commonly seen on apples and hawthorns but this disease also infests the fruit. Here is a recent picture sent in by Ruth in Stanley County of cedar-serviceberry rust on serviceberry. This is not the only disease of serviceberry. There is also a leaf spot disease that causes similar symptoms. If you are trying to grow serviceberries for the fruit there are a number of serious problems that may require sprays – not a “low maintenance” crop.



**Dying pine calls and emails are still coming in.** I received this picture from a local tree owner of graying and browning pine needles on the ponderosa pines in their belt. This tree owner is not the only one with this concern as pines are browning throughout the state. The common symptom pattern is stunted shoots with the needles on these infected shoot becoming discolored. The disease is diplodia tip blight,

probably the most common disease of pines, particularly Austrian pine. Symptoms in early summer are the new needles becoming brown and stunted. Twigs are infected and become stunted and deformed and there are often drops of resin on the infected shoots. The treatment is a fungicide containing thiophanate-methyl, propiconazole or chlorothalonil just before the bud sheaths have opened, timing is critical, and the treatment must be repeated in 10 to 14 days. The buds opened throughout the state a few weeks ago so it is too late for control – if the first treatment is not timed properly, the second treatment is of limited value as the disease will have already entered the expanding tissue.



I received this picture of **oystershell scale**. The oystershell scale is a sessile, sucking insect that is about 1/8-inch long, brown to gray and shaped like an oyster shell. The adults are not mobile, only the young nymph, referred to as a crawler, is capable of moving about the tree. The oystershell scale is an armored scale meaning it does not produce honeydew so there will be no sticky sap beneath the infested tree. Armored scales also cannot be controlled

by soil drenches of imidacloprid, as can be used to control soft scales. Oystershell scales are a common problem on ash, maples, lilacs and cotoneaster. They feed by withdrawing the sap from the tree, thereby weakening the host. This feeding activity rarely kills the tree but in high populations the feeding can result in thinning canopies, shoot dieback and tree decline. The best control, and even this is of limited value, is to treat the tree with a horticultural oil when the eggs have hatched and the crawlers are present. This usually occurs about the time common lilac flowers are beginning to fade so the control window is quickly fading.



**Another problem that is just beginning to occur is plum pockets.** This is a fungal disease of plums caused by *Taphrina communis*. All species of plums are susceptible and the disease is very common in our area. The symptoms begin as white blisters on the small developing fruit. As the blisters enlarge, the fruit becomes distorted and spongy. Eventually the fruit darkens to become grayish and hollow. There is nothing

that can be done about the disease now and little even during the control season as timing is critical. The control is a single spray of lime-sulfur applied just before bud-swell (note: do not apply lime-sulfur after the leaves form as it will damage them).



I received a picture of a strange growth on the tips of willow shoots. **This is the willow cone gall** created by the willow cone gall midge (*Rhabdophaga strobiloides*). The adult midge lays an egg on the expanding terminal bud and the feeding by the soon hatch larva causes this growth to occur. The midge larva is inside the cone gall at this time and will form a pupa next spring and then the adult. There is no effective control, nor does there need to be as the galls usually only

result in some distorted branches.

## **Samples received**

Minnehaha County FL1200016  
**in a pasture. What is the problem?**

**There are three dying spruces**

A sample of bare branches and twigs does not tell me much. I will schedule a visit next Thursday.